FBIS DAILY REPORT

MIDDLE EAST & SOUTH ASIA REVIEW

13 APRIL 1987

Iran-Iraq War

Following continued fighting over the weekend, IRNA reported Iranian forces are "firmly stationed" west of the Jasim River and Fish Lake in the "Karbala'-8" area, noting that at least three Iraqi command bases east of Basra were destroyed. Iran defeated "heavy" Iraqi counteroffensives in this region on 10 and 11 April, killing or wounding more than 3,000 Iraqis in the second clash, Tehran radio noted. "Dozens" of Iranian aircraft bombed Iraqi positions and Iran's ground forces shot down an Su-22, the radio reported. IRNA said Iraq carried out a chemical attack on residential areas of Khorramshahr, but that Iranian forces were able to foil a chemical raid in the "Karbala'-8" region west of the Jasim River. IRNA said troops had beaten back 10 Iraqi counterattacks in the "Karbala'-9" area since the operation began.

Iraq, on the other hand, claimed full control over the operational sector east of Basra in a military communique carried by Voice of the Masses radio. Iraqi aircraft bombed Hoseyniyeh railroad station and oil installations on Iran's Farsi Island on 11 April, according to another Iraqi communique carried by the radio, which added that one of its aircraft was downed during the missions. In statements to the radio and INA, Iraq's military spokesman said three Iranian Phantoms were shot down, and two large maritime targets near the Iranian coast were hit. An Iranian military spokesman denied the downing of the aircraft in a statement to IRNA. Two of four Iranian boats were sunk when they attempted to approach Al-'Amiq port, INA also noted.

Iraqi forces destroyed 10 Iranian guard divisions in fighting since 7 April, and wiped out Iranian "human waves" on all axes, INA reported. In a statement carried by Voice of the Masses radio, the Iraqi military spokesman said three Iranian attacks were repulsed on 10 April, and a statement by an Iraqi Defense Ministry official carried by the radio said a "large-scale" Iraqi counterattack on 11 April killed thousands of Iranians both on the front line and deep within Iranian territory.

PLO

Yasir 'Arafat of the PLO, George Habash of the PFLP, and Nayif Hawatimah of the DFLP were included in the delegation of Palestinian leaders which was received 12 April by Algerian party official Mohamed Cherif Messaadia, Algiers radio reported. The Palestinian leaders are in the Algerian capital to promote Palestinian unity in preparation for a PNC session scheduled to start 20 April, according to Sanaa Voice of Palestine radio. Fatah's Revolution Council has given Yasir 'Arafat authority to negotiate "a new formula for Jordanian-Palestinian relations and Palestinian-Egyptian contacts," *The Jordan Times* disclosed.

In the framework of the Algiers consultations, Abu Nidal, head of Fatah-Revolutionary Council, had a "prolonged meeting" 11 April with Khalil al-Wazir, PLO deputy military commander, according to an *Al-Khalij* report cited by WAKH.

In remarks to the Italian paper *Il Manifesto* cited by KUNA, DFLP leader Hawatimah said that Libya, Algeria, and the Soviet Union agree that the PNC meeting should be held on schedule to restore Palestinian unity and activate Palestinian diplomacy toward the convocation of an international conference with the participation of all parties concerned, including the PLO.

Israel

West Bank Disturbances — Israeli settlers rampaged through the town of Qalqilyah 12 April following news that an Israeli woman had been killed and her husband and three children badly burned when the car in which they were travelling was hit by a molotov cocktail near Hablah, Jerusalem radio reported. The firebombing was the most serious of a number of incidents against the Israeli presence and supporting the demands of hunger-striking Arab prisoners. A curfew was imposed on Qalqilyah and Habla, and four educational institutes, including Ramallah Teachers College, were closed down 12 April for 2 weeks, the radio said. The defense forces carried out "widespread arrests of PLO activists," the radio also noted. In an interview with IDF Radio, Defense Minister Yitzaq Rabin denied that security is lax in the West Bank. Rabin stressed that although he may understand the "fury" of the Alfe Menashe settlers, "under no circumstances whatsoever" can he condone their actions.

Lebanon

Israeli Raids — Israeli helicopters raided areas in southern Lebanon 11 April killing five persons, Beirut radio reported, adding that Israeli aircraft also carried out mock raids over Sidon and the camps on the same day. On 12 April, Voice of Lebanon radio noted more Israeli overflights, which drew fire from ground defenses.

Sidon Withdrawal — Efforts by the Central Coordination Committee to implement a Palestinian withdrawal from positions east of Sidon failed, Beirut Voice of National Resistance radio announced. According to an Amal official cited by Beirut radio, the Palestinians requested a postponement. A Fatah official in Beirut told AFP there would be no pullout until the seige on Palestinian camps is lifted and movement in and out of the camps, including Al-Rashidiyah, is permitted, Beirut radio noted.

Security Situation — Syria's Colonel 'Abd al-Salam Daghestani and Sunni leaders agreed that beginning 10 April Syrian soldiers will help Lebanese troops patrol the western side of Beirut's demarcation line, Voice of Lebanon radio reported. In the south, two IDF soldiers were killed and two others wounded in a clash with "terrorists," Jerusalem radio announced. Beirut radio, citing an Islamic resistance communique, said the two Israeli

soldiers were killed in an ambush and seven others were killed when a personnel carrier was attacked. In East Beirut, two car bombs 15 meters apart exploded injuring 13 people, Voice of Lebanon radio reported.

Libya

Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi had a telephone conversation with Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad about efforts to reunite the Palestinian resistance, JANA reported 12 April. Al-Qadhdhafi also received a message from the YSP secretary general when he met with visiting PDRY Foreign Minister 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Dali on 11 April, Tripoli television noted.

Sudanese statements about the presence of Libyan troops on Sudanese territory have "exceeded the limits of reason," a foreign liaison spokesman asserted in a statement carried by JANA on 12 April. The spokesman maintained that only GUNT forces are present in Sudan and that the Sudan's statements show that the "shadow of the lackey government" and U.S. influence are still present.

Sudan

Prime Minister Al-Sadiq al-Mahdi thanked Libya for its gift of four MiG-25 aircraft and said that the Libyan gesture is "sure evidence" of "common interests," SUNA reported 12 April. Other defense officials praised bilateral military cooperation and Libya's support for the Sudanese people.

Egypt

The alliance of the Socialist Labor Party (SLP), the Socialist Liberal Party, and the Muslim Brotherhood elected SLP Chairman Ibrahim Shukri opposition leader in the new People's Assembly, MENA reported.

Iran

Gulf Shipping — During his Friday sermon reported by Tehran radio, President Seyyed 'Ali Khamene'i asserted that neither the United States nor USSR can safeguard security in the Persian Gulf and warned the United States against making any moves against Iran in the region. Khamene'i said the U.S. "uproar" about strengthening its forces in the Gulf is aimed at reassuring "reactionary" Arab and Gulf states. Iran's UN representative held a news conference on the same issue, stressing that the United States should not lend its flag to vessels of other countries as this will not deter Iran from intercepting them.

Domestic Aid — The planning and budget minister announced that credit of $1.35 billion has been allocated to provide basic goods to the public at "stable" prices, Tehran Radio reported citing IRNA. Coupons for necessary goods will also be given to low income citizens and "esteemed families of martyrs and workers," the minister added.

Western Sahara

An Armed Forces communique reported by Rabat radio announced 80 Saharan troops were killed in their attempt to break through a defense wall on 8 April, adding that only 23 Moroccan officers and soldiers were killed. The construction of a sixth Moroccan defense wall near a "very sensitive Mauritanian area" is a "very serious situation," according to a Mauritanian Foreign Ministry statement carried by Nouakchott radio on 12 April. The statement maintained that nothing can justify such a situation and that Mauritania must give priority to "arranging its defensive means."

Algeria

USSR First Deputy Foreign Minister Yuliy Vorontsov arrived in Algiers from Libya and delivered a message from Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev to President Chadli Bendjedid on 11 April, Algiers radio reported.

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Najibullah Receives Envoys, Discusses Cooperation
LD121923 Kabul Domestic Service in Dari
1600 GMT 12 Apr 87

[Text] Comrade Najibullah, general secretary of the PDPA Central Committee, met this morning at 1100 the ambassadors of the friendly and fraternal countries of the DRA at the headquarters of the Central Committee. Comrade Abdol Wakil, member of the Politburo of the PDPA Central Committee and minister of foreign affairs, was also present at the meeting.

During the meeting Comrade Najibullah gave a comprehensive briefing on party life and recent developments in the national, regional and international spheres. He briefed them in detail about the current process of the national reconciliation policy in the country.

During the meeting Comrade Najibullah also exchanged views with them on further expanding and developing mutual relations with the friendly and fratenal countries in the various spheres of the political, social, and economic life of the DRA and drew their attention to the assistance and cooperation necessary for the DRA at present.

At the end of this meeting ambassador and representative extraordinary of the People's Republic of Mongolia and dean of the diplomatic corps, having expressed support for the struggle of Afghanistan's people and the current process of national reconciliation aimed at ensuring nationwide peace in the country, promised not to spare any necessary assistance and cooperation in the political, economic, cultural, and technical spheres for Afghanistan's people.

RSFSR Transport Minister Meets With Keshtmand
LD121912 Kabul Domestic Service in Dari
1600 GMT 12 Apr 87

[Text] This morning Comrade Soltan 'Ali Keshtmand, member of the Politburo of the PDPA Central Committee and chairman of the DRA Council of Ministers, met Comrade Yuriy Sergeyevich Sukhin, Minister of motor transport of the RSFSR, who is in the DRA on a friendly visit.

Sher Jan Mazduryar, minister of transport; Mohammad Khan Jalalar, minister of commerce; Pavel Petrovich Mozhayev, ambassador and representative extraordinary of the USSR; (Yuriy Pedrovich Chabarov), minister counsellor at the USSR Embassy; Aleksandr Petrov, economic counsellor at the USSR Embassy in the DRA; and (Mikhail Andrianovich Pezhilov), USSR trade representative in the DRA were present at the meeting.

During the meeting, which took place in a friendly atmosphere, views were exchanged on cooperation in the transport sphere between the DRA and the USSR and on the possibilities for expanding and developing the transport activities of the DRA Ministry of Transport.

PDPA Politburo Approves State Plan, Budget
LD101059 Kabul BAKHTAR in English 0451 GMT
10 Apr 87

[Text] Kabul, April 9, *Bakhtar* — A session of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan was held here today. The Political Bureau studied and discussed the results of the socio-economic development plan and the state budget of the DRA for the last Afghan year, ended on March 20, 1987 and the state budget for the current Afghan year.

Assessing the report presented by Soltan 'Ali Keshtmand, Politburo member of the PDPA CC and chairman of the Council of Ministers of the DRA, the Political Bureau of the PDPA CC pointed out that historically significance events have taken place during the last Afghan year. Among other things, a relative economic growth has been provided. The gross domestic product, based on the price index of 1978, was registered at 155.3 billion afghanis with a growth rate of 3.3 percent and national income was recorded at 103.4 billion afghanis with a growth rate of 3.5 per cent.

The agricultural production has [passage indistinct] and that of industry 3.4 percent over its preceding year. Investment from domestic and foreign sources has increased by 29 percent.

The volume of retail trade turnover in the state, mixed and cooperative sectors was estimated at 22.6 billion afghanis indicating a growth rate of 6.3 percent in the last Afghan year as compared with the Afghan year ended March 20, 1986. Presently, ninety-eight projects are under construction with the technical and economic assistance of the Soviet Union.

While the Political Bureau confirmed the results of the socio-economic development plan of the past year, it endorsed the annual socio-economic development plan and the state budget for the current Afghan year, began on March 21, 1987.

The Political Bureau reaffirmed the role of the private sector in the economy and it was pointed out that the contribution of the private sector to the gross national product is over 80 per cent. Thus, the party and state of the DRA will be providing further facilities for its ensuing development.

The Political Bureau endorsed some regulations pertaining to the activities of the Economic Consultative Council and the Institute of Social Sciences of the PDPA CC.

The Political Bureau of the PDPA CC approved that an international competition of Quran recitation is to be held in the coming fasting month. The Quran reciters of the Islamic countries are to be invited from the Islamic countries to participate in the competitions.

A number of domestic and foreign subjects were also assessed by the Political Bureau.

Gandhi Comments on Elections, Fairfax Issue

BK111603 Delhi Domestic Service in English
1530 GMT 11 Apr 87

[Text] The prime minister, Mr Rajiv Gandhi, today announced the setting up of a pilot project which will help the farmers get fertilizers and seeds at one center at a time. Inaugurating a seminar on development at Sultanpur in Uttar Pradesh, Mr Gandhi reiterated that his government is committed to remove poverty, unemployment and illiteracy and to ensure proper implementation of the 20-point program. He said the pilot project in Sultanpur will later be extended to other areas.

Later, talking to newsmen Mr Gandhi said he is prepared to have a dialogue with the opposition for an understanding on a consensus candidate for the presidential election.

In reply to a question on the Fairfax issue, Mr Gandhi said there should be no difference of opinion within his party on this. He said he had spoken to the defense minister, Mr Vishwantath Pratap Singh and Mr Dinesh Singh. He had advised them not to make any public statement on the issue.

About the reorganization of the AICCI [All India Congress Committee-I] Mr Gandhi said he had asked Mr Uma Shaker Dixit to submit a report.

President Briefed on Defense Deal

BK120320 Delhi Domestic Service in English
0240 GMT 12 Apr 87

[Text] The home minister, Mr Buta Singh, and the commerce minister, Mr Shiv Shanker, briefed the president, Giani Zail Singh, yesterday on developments following the defense minister's order for a probe into a defense deal. They were deputed by the prime minister to meet the president before Mr Gandhi left for Sultanpur as the president had desired to be briefed on the subject.

Defense Minister V.P. Singh Submits Resignation

BK120924 Hong Kong AFP in English 0903 GMT 12 Apr 87

[Text] New Delhi, April 12 (AFP) — Defense Minister Vishwanath Pratap Singh has sent his resignation to Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, the *Press Trust of India* (PTI) reported Sunday. PTI added that the resignation had been forwarded to President Zail Singh for acceptance. An emergency cabinet meeting was to be held later Sunday.

The resignation follows Mr. Singh's announcement earlier this week that he had launched an inquiry into an alleged 24-million-dollar kickback paid to an Indian on a single defence deal which threatened to implicate Mr. Gandhi and the ruling Congress (I) Party.

A member of Mr. Singh's family told *Agence France-Presse* over the telephone that he had gone to see Mr. Gandhi in Delhi after lunch and had yet to return.

Senior Congress Party members had called for Mr. Singh's head and interpreted the probe announcement as deliberately engineered to embarrass Mr. Gandhi.

In January the prime minister unexpectedly shifted Mr. Singh to defence from the Finance Ministry, where he had headed a massive anti-corruption drive and enhanced his reputation as India's most honest politician. The move brought widespread accusations that the finance minister had been moved sideways because investigations he launched into billions of dollars stashed illegally abroad by Indians were proving too embarrassing.

Allegations surfaced that a close aide of Mr. Gandhi's was one of several people, as well as leading business houses, involved in the illegal transfer of funds.

Mr. Singh took the finance portfolio in January 1985 in Mr. Gandhi's first cabinet and is a former chief minister of Uttar Pradesh State. He resigned as chief minister in 1982 after failing to control banditry in the state within a deadline he set himself.

Delhi Confirms Resignation

BK121006 Delhi General Overseas Service in English
1000 GMT 12 Apr 87

[Text] The defense minister of India, Mr V.P. Singh, has resigned from the union cabinet. His resignation has been forwarded to the president.

New Minister Appointed

BK121210 Hong Kong AFP in English 1205 GMT 12 Apr 87

[Text] New Delhi, April 12 (AP) — Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi appointed Krishna Chandra Pant as defence minister here Sunday, following the resignation of Vishwanath Pratap Singh, the *Press Trust of India* (PTI) reported.

Mr Pant, who has been minister of steel and mines since September 1985, first entered the lower house of Parliament in 1962. He remained there for the next 15 years holding numerous deputy ministerial posts, including finance, steel, home and energy. The 55-year-old Mr Pant is a veteran congress man known for keeping a low profile. He moved into the upper house in 1978 and then back to the lower house in 1984.

Energy Minister Vasant Sathe would look after the steel and mines portfolio temporarily, PTI added.

Mr Pant was appointed shortly after President Zail Singh accepted the letter of resignation from V.P. Singh on Mr Gandhi's advice.

Further on Resignation

BK121636 Delhi Domestic Service in English
1530 GMT 12 Apr 87

[Text] The defense minister, Mr Vishwanath Pratap Singh, has resigned. The president has accepted the resignation. Mr K.C.

Pant has been appointed the new defense minister, and his portfolio of steel and mines will be looked after by Mr Vasant Sathe for the present.

All India Radio's correspondent says today's swift development began with Mr V.P. Singh calling on the prime minister around noon for one-half an hour for what he described as a heart-to-heart talk. He followed this up with a two-line resignation letter, which the prime minister forwarded to the president for acceptance. Our correspondent says that Mr Singh's resignation is the culmination of the controversy sparked off by his order to probe into a defense deal. Political observers are of the view that various questions were raised by his party colleagues over the past 2 days about the propriety of Mr Singh's action. This precipitated his resignation.

Mr Singh said that the decision to resign was his own. He further observed that only such action can (?nail) the allegations by some of his party colleagues that he was scheming and overambitious. Mr Singh declared that he will not accept any position in the government in future but will continue to serve the people and the party. He also said that he will not exercise the option to give a statement on the floor of Parliament.

Answering queries from newsmen, Mr Singh said that his letter delivered to the prime minister last night was a personal one and he will not divulge any of the detail.

On the opposition criticism that honest men have no place in the government, Mr Singh said that it is a totally mistaken view. When asked whether a probe into the defense deal is sufficient enough, Mr Singh said that open inquiries into defense matters are not desirable. He said he did not agree with the contention of some of his partymen that the probe will tarnish the image of the government.

The prime minister, Mr Rajiv Gandhi, today apprised his cabinet colleagues with Mr Singh's resignation. Leaders of opposition parties in the Rajya Sabha have decided to request the chairman to allow a discussion tomorrow on the resignation. The decision was taken at a meeting in New Delhi today. The Rajya Sabha is meeting tomorrow after an intercession recess.

Delhi Notes Reaction

BK130308 Delhi Domestic Service in English
0240 GMT 13 Apr 87

[Text] The prime minister has nominated the external affairs minister, Mr N.D. Tiwari, as the leader of the Rajya Sabha in place of Mr V.P. Singh. This follows the resignation of Mr V.P. Singh from the union cabinet. As already reported Mr K.C. Pant has been appointed the new defense minister and his portfolio of steel and mines will be looked after by Mr Vasant Sathe for the present.

Meanwhile, the resignation of Mr Vishwanath Pratap Singh has evoked reactions from both the ruling party and the opposition. Forty-one Congress-I MP's in a statement have congratulated the prime minister for acting firmly in a crisis situation. They viewed the development as unfortunate because it has happened at a time when the unity and integrity of the nation is threatened by secessionists and their patrons from across the border. Opposition parties have hailed Mr Singh's role in handling both the finance and defense portfolios. Some of them, however, felt that he had been forced to quit.

Gujarat Police Kill 1; Chief Minister Visits Village

BK121644 Delhi Domestic Service in English
1530 GMT 12 Apr 87

[Text] In Gujarat, one person was killed and another injured in police firing at Mirpur village of (Kaira) District this evening. According to police sources, nine rounds were fired to disperse a violent mob, which attacked a police party in the village. The situation is reported to be tense but under control.

Meanwhile, the chief minister, Mr Amarsinh Chaudhari, visited the village yesterday. He appealed to the people to maintain an atmosphere of communal harmony. He announced an ex gratia payment of 20,000 rupees to the family of a youth killed in violent incidents on Thursday last. Mr Chaudhari also announced an assistance of 15,000 rupees each to those whose houses and shops were destroyed in the incidents. He said a relief camp will be started to provide shelter to the families rendered homeless.

Police, Gurkhas Exchange Fire in West Bengal

BK130940 Delhi Domestic Service in English
0830 GMT 13 Apr 87

[Text] In West Bengal, police arrested 34 persons in a raid at (Kurupatha) and Kalimpong subdivision of Darjeeling District yesterday. Following the raid there was an extensive exchange of fire between the GNLF [Gurkha National Liberation Front] supporters and the police. The district magistrate, Mr. G.P. (Pathak), told our Kurseong correspondent that the DIG [Deputy Inspector General of Police], Mr R.K. Handa, was seriously injured in the incident.

According to the district magistrate, police recovered 4 guns, 12 bombs, and a large quantity of bomb-making material from the spot. The situation in the area is now under control.

AFP: Airspace Violation by Afghan Planes Reported

BK121656 Hong Kong AFP in English 1638 GMT 12 Apr 87

[Text] Islamabad, Apr 12 (AFP) — Four Afghan fighter-jets violated Pakistan's airspace on Sunday morning and dropped light bombs in western Bajaur Agency, more than 200 kilometres (120 miles) west of here, correspondents in the area reported.

The jets penetrated several kilometres deep inside Pakistani territory at about 9.30 a.m. (0530 GMT) [as received], the correspondents said, adding that no loss of life or property was reported.

The Afghan planes fled when two Pakistani U.S.-made F-16's appeared on the scene, the same sources said.

Afghan artillery also shelled bordering Hilal village in Bajaur Agency on Sunday, as a result of which one person was killed and another injured, the correspondents added.

Foreign Office Lodges Protest Over DRA Shelling

BK131530 Karachi Domestic Service in Urdu
1500 GMT 13 Apr 87

[Text] Afghan Armed Forces fired five rounds from the bank at (Khar Gali) area, injuring two citizens and damaging a house. (Khar Gali) is situated nearly 8 miles west of Landi Kotal in Khyber Agency.

The Afghan charge d'affaires was summoned to the Foreign Office this morning and a strong protest was lodged with him over this unprovoked act.

President Visits Rawalpindi Bombing Victims

BK101600 Karachi Domestic Service in Urdu
1500 GMT 10 Apr 87

[Excerpts] President Mohammad Ziaul Haq visited the Rawalpindi General Hospital today and asked about the condition of the people injured in yesterday evening's blast. The president visited each and every people and noted their high morale. The governor of Punjab accompanied the president on the occasion.

The president appreciated the services of all the doctors, nurses and other personnel of the hospital for taking care of the injured round the clock. He also commended the spirit of a large number of people who arrived at the hospital to donate blood.

The president said that no injured person died for lack of blood as there have been hundreds of blood donors present. The president said that he was very impressed by the unprecedented humanitarian spirit. He highly praised those donating blood voluntarily. He said that this is a solemn spirit that has been displayed by the Pakistanis.

President Mohammad Ziaul Haq urged the people to courageously face the tragedy and assist in identifying the saboteurs so that exemplary punishment given to them.

The president also met with relatives of the wounded and expressed his sympathies. [passage omited]

Meanwhile, three more persons injured in the explosion died at the district headquarters hospital today. Two of them succumbed to their injuries during the night, thereby bringing the number of dead in the explosion to 14. The condition of four injured is serious. Various other injured are under treatment at different hospitals.

Experts have confirmed that the explosion was caused by a high explosive material which was kept in a vehicle. Police sources say the explosive weighed 25 kilograms.

Federal minister for education, health and social welfare, Nasim Ahmad Ahir, and federal minister for religious and minority affairs, Haji Muhammad Saifullah Khan, expressed deep grief over the loss of precious lives in the bomb blast in Rawalpindi yesterday evening. They also expressed sympathies with those injured in the blast.

NEPAL

Banned Party Wins Kathmandu Mayoral Elections

BK111326 Hong Kong AFP in English 1126 GMT 11 Apr 87

[Text] Kathmandu, April 11 (AFP) — Candidates from the banned Nepali Congress Party have captured elections for mayor and deputy mayor of Kathmandu and several city council seats, a party spokesman said Saturday. The Nepali Congress spokesman said that vote counting which ended Saturday at city hall here had shown that Nepali Congress candidates had soundly defeated their pro-government and leftist rivals in the capital. An official announcement of the results is expected later in the day or Sunday, the spokesman said.

Nepali Congress candidate Haribol Bhattarai won the election for mayor of Kathmandu, turning aside challenges from Marxist-Leninist hopeful Sita Ram Maskey and Ravi Charan Shrestha, the governemnt- backed candidate, the spokesman said.

The banned Nepali Congress openly contested local elections this year on a partisan basis despite the fact that this is forbidden under Nepal's partyless Panchayat system. It is the first time that the Nepali Congress has taken part in elections since the Panchayat system was introduced 26 years ago.

Observers said that the Nepali Congress electoral victories in the capital were evidence that the party is becoming a major political force in this mountainous Himalayan kingdom.

SRI LANKA

Further on Government-Announced Cease-Fire

2 Tamil Groups Reject Offer

BK120300 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0240 GMT 12 Apr 87

[Text] Two major Sri Lankan Tamil groups, the Tamil United Liberation Front [TULF] and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam [LTTE], have rejected the unilateral cease-fire announced by the Sri Lankan Government.

In a statement, the TULF said that laying down of conditions for lifting the economic and communication blockade of Jaffna indicates that Colombo is attempting to deceive the international community. It said the announcement is in complete contradiction of the earlier cabinet decision announcing the lifting of the fuel embargo. It wanted the government to lift the blockade immediately and unconditionally.

In a separate statement, the LTTE says a proper cease-fire should be mutually agreed to by the parties in conflict with obligatory terms and conditions. It described the unilateral cease-fire as a temporary one aimed at granting leave to war-weary soldiers. The statement said that if the troops are confined to barracks the LTTE will not attack.

The unilateral cease-fire started at 1200 yesterday and is scheduled to continue up to 0600 on the 20th of this month.

'Special Government Communique'

BK120945 Colombo LANKA PUWATH in English 0939 GMT 12 Apr 87

["Special Government Communique"]

[Text] Colombo, April 12 *(Lanka Puwath)* — The All India Radio reported in its 8.10 am [0240 GMT] news broadcast today (12.4.87) that the TULF and the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] have rejected the Sri Lankan government's call for a "cease fire".

The Government of Sri Lanka announced a unilateral cessation of hostile actions on the part of the security forces and not a confinement of soldiers to barracks.

There can be no cease-fire between fascist terrorist groups and a duly appointed democratic government as is in the case of terrorism in Punjab and elsewhere in India where the duly elected democratic government is headed by the Prime Minister Shri Rajiv Gandhi, states a special government communique issued by the media centre today.

'No Violations' Reported

BK120949 Colombo LANKA PUWATH in English 0927 GMT 12 Apr 87

[Text] Colombo, April 12 *(Lanka Puwath)* — No violations of the Sri Lanka government's unilateral declaration of stoppage of offensive action and the call to the terrorists to respond to it, during the period of the national and religious holidays begining noon Saturday 11th April, 1987 and ending 6 am Monday 20th April, 1987 have been reported except for the firing at an unarmed soldier in a shrub land clearing party within the Kurumbasetty security force camp in Jaffna at about 12.45 p.m. yesterday. This incident was reported yesterday, states a government communique issued by the Media Centre today.

Meanwhile, a report from Trincomalee states that last Friday the Sri Lanka navy intercepted a boat and captured two terrorists in the seas off Kuchchaveli, in eastern Sri Lanka. A large haul of jewellery including 35 gold sovereigns and heroin were recovered. Police are conducting further investigations.

Indian Paper Claims LTTE Ready To Negotiate

BK110955 Colombo LANKA PUWATH in English 0940 GMT 11 Apr 87

[Text] Colombo, April 11 *(Lanka Puwath)* — The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) leader Velupillai Prabakaran has told a group of prominent Jaffna citizens that the LTTE was prepared to enter into negotiations with the Sri Lankan Government under the auspices of India, according to an Indian press report monitored by *Lanka Puwath*.

Yesterday's (April 10) 'HINDU' carries a report that according to certain Jaffna residents Prabakaran has said he is willing to talk with the Sri Lankan Government under certain conditions. They included suspension of military operations and removal of economic and communications restrictions.

(National Security Minister Lalith Athulathmudali said yesterday while announcing that the security forces will not take any unilateral action from 12 noon today till 6 am on April 20 that if absolute peace reigns during this period the government would reconsider the lifting of the fuel rationing scheme in the Jaffna peninsula for a further period and if during that period too peace is maintained then the way would be paved for a meaningful peace negotiations).

The report states that Prabakaran has met a few prominent Jaffna residents some days ago in an informal discussion and two of them revealed details to the 'HINDU' on condition of anonymity. According to them Prabakaran had said the LTTE was prepared to talk with the Sri Lankan Government under Indian auspices. The LTTE was prepared to accept the December 19 proposals as a basis for further negotiations.

The 'HINDU' report stated that the LTTE leader had said he was prepared to adhere to a simultaneous cessation of hostilities once the (alleged) blockade was lifted.

Prabakaran was quoted as having indicated that any date after April 20th would be suitable for a mutual declaration of a ceasefire. The LTTE would not insist on the security forces returning to pre-December 19 positions as a prerequisite for negotiations. However, he has asked that there be no government pre-conditions.

Prabakaran was reported by the 'HINDU' as saying that he had remained silent since his return to Jaffna from India, as there were differences of opinion with the Indian mediators on issues pertaining to the ethnic crisis, but left his lieutenants in Jaffna and Madras to do the talking.

Meanwhile, another report states that India was believed to be confident of persuading the LTTE to participate in peace negotiations.

Observers in Colombo said that it was significant that the LTTE had, according to the 'HINDU' report, not insisted on a merger of the Northern and Eastern Provinces as a pre-condition for talks. This had earlier been one of its main demands.

The observers said that the LTTE's new stance was tantamount to a volte face. The reason for this could lie in the LTTE morale hitting a very low bottom after a series of humiliating defeats at the hands of the security forces, the loss of a number of its leaders, commencing with the killing of three in a truck bomb explosion and with Prabakaran's deputy (?being) crippled and there being no possibility of his returning to participate in terrorist operations.

Colombo Denies Report

BK121120 Colombo International Service in English 1045 GMT 12 Apr 87

[Text] The media center had denied reports that the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] leader, V. Prabakaran, was prepared to enter into negotiations with the Sri Lankan Government under the auspices of India.

Earlier, *Lanka Puwath*, quoting a report in *The Hindu* newspaper, said that Prabakaran during an informal discussion with prominent Indian citizens had expressed willingness to talk under certain conditions, which included the suspension of military operations and the removal of economic and communication restrictions.

Four Rebel Groups To Form United Democratic Front

BK111715 (Clandestine) Voice of Tamil Eelam in Tamil 1328 GMT 9 Apr 87

[Text] Informed sources from Madras reported yesterday that the four freedom fighter groups which were banned by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam [LTTE] have been holding talks now to merge together and form a united democratic front. These sources also reported that this united democratic front has been holding talks for the last 3 months to cast aside their differences of opinion and merge together.

The four groups which are holding talks are the PLOTE [People's Liberation Organization of Tamil Eelam] led by Kadirkamam Uma Maheswaran; TELO [Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization] led by Selvam; EPRLF [Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front] led by Sri Padmanabha; and a splinter group from the PLOTE under the leadership of Easwaran.

In the past few months there have been clashes between these four militant groups and the LTTE. As a result of these clashes TELO leader Sri Sabaratnam was killed by the LTTE in Kokkuvil last May. Meanwhile, the Tamil United Liberation Front leader Appapillai Amirthalingam has made an appeal for unity among the militant groups which are fighting for a Tamil Eelam.

U.S. Flag No Deterrent to Ship Inspections

LD111139 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1030 GMT 11 Apr 87

[Text] According to the report from the Central News Unit, Mr Rajai'e-Khorassani, permanent representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the United Nations, yesterday held a press conference on UN premises. He warned: The United States should not lend its flag to other countries that are shipping in the Persian Gulf because this will not deter Iran from intercepting vessels that are carrying weapons and other cargo bound for Iraq.

He said: Were we to be inspecting a vessel in the Persian Gulf, then certainly, regardless of whether this vessel were carrying the U.S. flag or another flag, we would continue our task. This is our right from the standpoint of international law, and it makes no difference to us what flag the vessel in question is carrying.

Navy To Continue Intercepting Hormuz Shipping

LD121112 Tehran IRNA in English 1047 GMT 12 Apr 87

[Text] Tehran, April 12, IRNA — Navy Commander Captain Hoseyn Malekzadegan said Sunday that if new Iraqi gunboats dared to enter in regional waters, Iranian naval forces were fully prepared to decisively destroy them.

Further speaking on the same subject, Captain Malekzadegan told IRNA that the Iranian Navy had prepared contingency plans for implementation in various parts of the regional waters and distant coasts in this connection. He added that devoted personnel of the navy's situation was so suitable that, if necessary, it would decisively implement its defensive plans.

The Iraqi regime recently purchased a number of 'Sea Wolf' gunboats from Italy but it seems that the Italian government is worried about their being destroyed before they reach Iraq, is reluctant to deliver them. [sentence as received] Iraqi crewmen of the gunboats are currently receiving training in Italy.

The navy commander emphasised that the Iranian Navy will continue the interception of foreign ships in the Strait of Hormuz, adding that any vessel regardless of its nationality, name or flag will be intercepted.

Any attempt by anyone to interfere with the mission of the naval forces will be interpreted as enemy action, and confronted decisively, Captain Malekzadegan said.

Referring to recent developments in regional waters, the navy commander said that the Iranian measures taken for the protection of littoral waters, vital resources, islands and also security of the region had, unfortunately, caused unreasonable worry among regional states. This worry, he stressed, resulted from pessimism and not being able to differentiate friend from foe.

The navy commander reiterated that the Islamic Republic of Iran would use its naval forces for the establishment of security in the region and confrontation with plots which would ultimately threaten security.

If Iran's neighbours call for help for the preservation and strengthening of security in the Persian Gulf, the Iranian naval forces were fully prepared to support them in this connection.

Khamene'i Calls For Sacrifice, Further Victories

LD111334 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1030 GMT 11 Apr 87

[Text] On the eve of the dispatch of the Lord of the Era Corps, 100,000 members strong, to the battlefronts Mr Rahmani, the official in charge of Mobilization of the Oppressed Unit of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps [IRGC], this morning presented a report to the chairman of the Supreme Defense Council on the dispatch of the Lord of the Era Corps in mid-Sha'ban, coinciding with 25 Farvardin [14 April] in the current Iranian year.

Mr Khamene'i, chairman of the Supreme Defense Council, referring to the glorious victories scored by Islam's combatants during the "Karbala'-5" offensive as a result of the dispatch of the Corps of Muhammad — may God's benedictions and peace be upon him — and Mahdi — may Almighty God hasten his noble advent — called for a vast participation by the dear mobilization forces in the dispatch of the Lord of the Era Corps — may Almighty God hasten his noble advent — in order to secure the brilliant victories of the various "Karbala'-8" and "Karbala'-9" offensives.

Khamene'i said: In this important and sensitive juncture in Islamic history, coinciding with the sacred birthday anniversary of the savior of the world [Al-Mahdi, the hidden 12th imam] the Lord of the Era Corps — may Almighty God hasten his noble advent — by their powerful presence on the battlefields of the imposed war should register their brilliant victories in the annals of this war.

Referring to the impending blessed month of Ramadan, a month of purification, coming close to God, and self-molding, the president of the republic said: This month is also one of sacrifice and jihad and presence on the battlefronts vis-a-vis the devils subservient to world arrogance.

The chairman of the Supreme Defense Council added: It is hoped that our mobilization and heroic combatants throughout the country, by applying in person and registering their names in the IRGC's districts and bases and the resistance centers of the Mobilization of the Oppressed, will impart even greater pride and glory to the the Lord of the Era Corps so that — God willing — with the continuation of operations further and greater victories will belong to Islam's combatants.

Joint Staff Chief Briefs Khamene'i on Operations

LD120915 Tehran IRNA in English 0908 GMT 12 Apr 87

[Text] Tehran, April 12, IRNA — Head of the Joint Staff of the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Colonel Esma'il Sohrabi conferred with president and head of the Supreme Defence Council Seyyed 'Ali Khamene'i, Sunday morning.

Colonel Sohrabi briefed the president on the victorious [as received] of Karbala'-9 operations and the high morale of Muslim combatants as well as the current affairs of the army.

Military Spokesman Summarizes Basra Operations

LD121010 Tehran IRNA in English 1006 GMT 12 Apr 87

[Text] Tehran, April 12, IRNA — The Muslim combatants of Iran in their Karbala'-8 operations launched east of Basra last Tuesday successfuly reached their pre-determined objectives in smashing another batch of Iraqi forces, said a commander of the Khatem ol-Anbiya' Headquarters here Sunday.

More on the operations, he said that the Baghdad regime had dispatched two thirds of its forces to East Basra, an objective of the operations was to smash them, he added. [sentence as received] In this respect, he stressed, the Muslim forces of Iran scored outstanding victories and inflicted heavy casualties on the Iraqis.

According to the commander the Iranian troops at present are firmly stationed west of Jasim River and west of the Fish Lake checking all enemy movements. The heavy artillery fire of the Muslim combatants, he added, was still inflicting more casualties on the Iraqi forces. The commander added that foreign reporters could visit the strongholds of the Iranian forces in the region.

As for the Karbala'-9 operations launched in central sector of war fronts last Thursday, he said that the Iranian forces were vigilantly safeguarding their positions and have so far inflicted irreparable blows on the Iraqis in the area.

Majlis Speaker Inspects Battlefronts, Visits Ilam

LD112121 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 2030 GMT 11 Apr 87

[Text] The imam's representative on the Supreme Defense Council, Mr Hashemi-Rafsanjani, who was making a tour of the western part of the country in order to inspect the battlefronts, made a brief visit to Ilam. During this stopover, he met with the families of martyrs and local officials and praised their resistance and self-sacrifice in coping with the destruction brought about by Iraqi bombing.

Montazeri Addresses Qom Seminary Students

LD101356 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1030 GMT 10 Apr 87

[Text] A group of religious students and missionaries affiliated with the supervisory council of Qom seminary, accompanied by several officials of the war relief headquarters of Esfahan Province, a number of honored families of the martyrs, combatant teachers, several sports teachers and members of the shooting federation, yesterday evening met Grand Ayatollah Montazeri in Qom.

During this meeting, Grand Ayatollah Montazeri referred to human nature, graciously pointing out: A human being is composed of body and soul, and each of these two parts affect each other. Sports and correct and graceful physical movements will keep the people healthy, and it is thus said that healthy bodies have healthy minds. Everyone should, therefore, strive to strengthen their bodies and minds and remain immune from illness and disease. A strong healthy body will not be any use if we feel weak mentally and have low morale regarding our enemies or carnal desires.

The noble Prophet, may God's benedictions and salutations be upon him and his acion, has said: A strong man is the one who is in control of his soul and desires and does not show weakness in the face of accidents, tragedies, hardship and carnal desires. The reason Islam instructs fathers and mothers to feed their children from lawful earnings and to avoid evil thoughts at the time of conception — and even Islam has particular instructions for breast feeding babies — it is all because unlawful food and unhealthy thoughts will have undesirable effects on the child's mind. Almighty God has provided a body and soul defense mechanism for mankind, and every person has blood corpuscles as soldiers defending the body against intruding germs. God has also given the power of anger to the mind so that a person can stand against aggressors who threaten his religion, existence, belongings, sancitites, homeland, and Islamic belief.

Continuing his remarks, the deputy leader [qa'em maqam-e rahbar] said: Had the Muslims of the region armed themselves with the modern weapons of the day and the weapons of knowledge and piety, the superpowers would never have dared to persuade the insane Saddam to attack Iran. The Muslims are, therefore, duty-bound to receive training in military tactics, while arming themselves with the weapons of science and piety, so that they will be able to guard their religion and country against the enemies of Islam.

Addressing the religious students and ulema who are going for missionary duty, Grand Ayatollah Montazeri said: I suggest that you should correct yourselves first and then embark upon correcting other people. 'Ali, peace be upon him, in his book of Nahj al-Balaghah has said: Anyone who has the ambition of guiding the people should correct himself before preaching and training others, and should strive to convert the people to justice by his own action and not by preaching. You, dear brothers, should therefore try to make contact with the ulema and outstanding personalities of the land that you visit so as to develop coordination. You should go to those places where the need for missionaries is greatest.

His eminence graciously added: No matter how qualified we are, the more we study the better we understand that what we do not know exceeds what we do know, Therefore, if there is something that you have no knowledge of, say it openly that you do not know, so that the people are not misguided in learning Islamic matters. When you are preaching in the holy month of Ramadan, or in other occasions, do refer to the imam's epistle and the written books of his holiness, may God lengthen his lofty shadow, and make the people familiar with Islamic teachings, tradition and culture.

The deputy leader then said: Try to raise Islamic issues in a simple language the people understand. You should realize that

the world of Islam, particularly such deprived regions as Africa, needs you acutely. At present. the Christian missionaries have overtaken Africa to convert the people to so-called Christianity. Your burden of duty is thus very heavy, and if you gentlemen were to succeed in guiding only one man, this would be more valuable and rewarding to you than anything else under the sun, according to a saying.

There is an Islamic saying: A scholar whose knowledge benefits the people is more valuable than 70,000 individuals engaged in saying prayers. You, gentlemen, wherever you go beware of fanning the flames of existing differnces and prejudices. Do not be influenced by certain trends, and do not drag discord into public preaching and gatherings for social events. Do invite all the people to unity and harmony, so that the Almighty rewards you with His mercy and blessing, since, at this juncture the world of Islam needs unity more than anything else.

In conclusion, Grand Ayatollah Montazeri said prayers for the victory of the combatants of Islam on the fronts of Iran, Lebanon, Palestine, and Afghanistan, and for the health and long life of his holiness the imam.

Health Minister Departs for China Visit

LD121729 Tehran IRNA in English 1703 GMT 12 Apr 87

[Text] Tehran, April 12, IRNA — Minister of Health 'Ali Reza Marandi left for Beijing at the head of a delegation Sunday at the invitation of his Chinese counterpart.

Before his departure, Marandi told IRNA that he is to visit educational and scientific centres of that country, during his three-day stay. The Iranian delegation will study Iran-China cooperation, especially in herbal medicine and acupuncture, the minister said adding that the Islamic Republic is keen to acquaint itself with the experiments of Chinese experts in the two fields.

Planning Minister Announces Credit To Provide Goods

LD112222 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 2030 GMT 11 Apr 87

[Text] A credit of $1.35 billion has been allocated to provide basic and necessary goods for the public, to be distributed at stable prices during the present year [beginning 20 March 87].

According to an IRNA report, Planning and Budget Minister Zanjani, in announcing the above, added: A project under state auspices to provide coupons for basic goods to esteemed families of martyrs and workers as well as low income citizens will be implemented. Further, more basic goods will be made available to laborers and employees.

The planning and budget minister also announced other government plans for improving the lives of the deprived and oppressed people of society. A credit of 15 billion rials has been allocated to continue the Martyr Raja'i Project and 8 billion rials has been allocated to the Imam's Relief Committee. In addition, a clause has been provided to cover families of soldiers without a provider; this has been named the Mo'in Project.

In conclusion, the planning and budget minister spoke about the share of exports and taxes in the budget saying: This year, a decision was made at the Supreme Council for Expansion of Exports to double the share of non-oil exports. Efforts will be made to double income from non-oil exports for last year, that is, to reach a figure close $1.4 billion, which would be a great development for the country.

Official Denies Oil Customers Given Discounts

LD121507 Tehran IRNA in English 1448 GMT 12 Apr 86

[Text] Tehran, April 12, IRNA — Deputy oil minister for commercial and international affairs Hoseyn Kazempur-Ardabili categorically denied reports by certain world oil circles that Iran was giving discounts to its oil purchasers. "Iran has always been the pioneer for implementation of fixed oil prices," he said.

Kazempur-Ardabili said that such rumors were aimed at giving the impression that decisions made by OPEC were not solid, weakening the discipline in the organization and driving down oil prices.

Iran expects all OPEC member countries to fully observe discipline within the framework of OPEC's decisions which he said would result in overcoming the past oil crisis and in further stabilizing world oil prices.

He also said that Iran was concerned over Kuwait and Saudi Arabia's decision to renew agreements with Iraq to provide facilities and export oil on behalf of that country.

The deputy oil minister expressed hope that such measures, which he said were contrary to all efforts of OPEC member states in 1986 would be revised.

He also called on non-OPEC oil producers especially the Soviet Union, Norway, Mexico, Egypt and Oman to be careful of the special seasonal period of the oil market and to implement their previously announced decision on decreasing oil productions.

IRGC Naval Units To Begin Caspian Sea Training

LD111009 Tehran IRNA in English 1009 GMT 11 Apr 87

[Text] Sari, Mazandaran Prov. April 11, IRNA — Islamic Revolution's Guards Corps (IRGC) naval units are to begin training on the Caspian Sea coasts sometime this year, at newly established marine science facilities, an IRGC commander said in this northern city Friday. He told reporters that naval bases in the Caspian region were established on the orders of Imam Khomeyni, who also ordered IRGC ground and air forces be set up as well.

Centers where marine sciences are taught will be established in northern Mazandaran and Gilan Provinces, because of the special geographical situation of the two provinces, the commander said.

Praising Iranian people for their continued support and financial assistance to the war fronts and the Muslim forces, the IRGC official said that so far Mazandaran people have contributed five billion rials (dlrs 65 million) in cash and 520 million rials (dlrs 6.5 million) worth commodities to the war fronts.

He also praised the role the 'Special Division 25 of Karbala' ' played in the outstanding victories of Muslim combatants of Iran in the Val-Fajr-8 operation. which liberated the Iraqi port city of Al- Faw last year.

Reportage on Combat Operations in War With Iraq

Communique No 2,802

LD101709 Tehran IRNA in English 1700 GMT 10 Apr 87

[Text] Tehran, April 10, IRNA — Iranian naval forces intercepted 20 foreign cargo ships, tankers and tugboats in the Hormuz Strait Thursday, but allowed them to set sail since no suspicious cargo turned up on board, said Joint Staff Communique No. 2802 here Friday.

The communique said that exchange of artillery fire continued in southern fronts Thursday raging more heavily in Karbala'-8 theater, east of Basra, with Iranian combatants maintaining superiority.

Artillery fire of the Iranian gendarmerie forces on Iraqi positions and strongholds in parts of western and southern fronts set ablaze a military vehicle, a munitions depot as well as several group bunkers and watch posts, killing or wounding a number of enemy soldiers, the communique said.

Iraq 'Confessed' to Defeat

LD101945 Tehran IRNA in English 1925 GMT 10 Apr 87

[Text] Ahvaz, Khuzestan Prov., April 10, IRNA — The Iraqi Ba'thist regime finally confessed to the feat of its second corps in Karbala'-9 operational region breaking its 24 hour silence over the issue.

Iraqi Radio Sawt al-Jamahir (the Voice of the Republic) pointing to the last communique of Iraqi Army Command announced that Iranian forces had succeeded in 'gaining footsteps' against units of the Iraqi Second Corps. Iraq usually refers to Iranian advances as 'gaining footsteps.'

Iraqi Casualties Exceed 1,000

LD101953 Tehran IRNA in English 1941 GMT 10 Apr 87

[Text] Karbala'-9 Operational Theater, April 10, IRNA — Iraqi casualty toll in this region exceeded 1,000 Friday morning, with the enemy losing a considerable number of tanks, personnel carriers, heavy and light equipment, five howitzers, several mortar launchers and four munitions depots.

Iranian Muslim combatants have beaten back 10 Iraqi counterattacks in the region since Thursday afternoon, where they also routed remnants of battalions 2, 3, and 4 of the Commando Brigade as well as those of the Fourth Battalion, Brigade 3 of Iraq's Second Corps.

So far heights 'Reza 1,2,3,' 'Sepestanak' 'Baba Hadi' as well as Baba Hadi outpost have been liberated in the course of Karbala'-9 offensive.

Iraqi Counteroffensive Defeated

LD102045 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1630 GMT 10 Apr 87

[Text] The heaviest counteroffensive launched this afternoon by the crumbling Ba'thist-Zionist Army of Iraq in the operational region of "Karbala'-8", has been defeated thanks to the selfless and steadfast forces of Islam who inflicted further heavy losses on the enemy.

In accordance with direct orders by Saddam, Iraqi defense minister Lieutenant General 'Adnan Khayrallah; Lieutenant General Thabit Sultan, chief of the joint staff of the armed forces; Lieutenant General (Ismail Taha al-Na'ni), acting chief of the joint staff and commander of the I Army Corps, were charged with missions to recapture positions of the Iraqi Army in the eastern area of Basra using their full resources. This was in the wake of "Karbala'-8" operations and the advances made by the forces of Islam in the western axis of Fish Lake [as heard] and east of Basra.

A report says that Defense Minister Lt Gen 'Adnan Khayrallah, and other senior Iraqi commanders selected units from the [Iraqi] III, IV, VI, and VII Army Corps and launched a heavy counteroffensive supported by artillery and aerial fire. The Islamic forces, adopting an innovative tactic in repelling the enemy counteroffensive, encircled the aggressive Ba'thist forces in a 60-degree angle, surrounded supply lines and support axes of the enemy, and subsequently smashed all enemy units from Al-Miqdad commando forces, commando forces of Muhammad al-Qasim, and Taruq ibn Ziyad, following an intense battle at close quarters.

The latest report in this connection indicates that the battle, began at 1400 today, receded after 4 hours, following the mopping up of the operational axis, and due to the complete supremacy of the Islamic forces.

Cities Chemically Bombed

LD111800 Tehran IRNA in English 1720 GMT 11 Apr 87

[Text] Tehran, April 11, IRNA — Iraqi regime chemically bombed Karbala'-8 operational theater, the cities of Abadan and Khorramshahr as well as Mared village of Khuzestan Province several times Saturday, following its heavy defeats in the war fronts. Reports reaching here added that Iranian anti-chemical units immediately neutralized effects of the toxic substances.

The resumption of the Iraqi chemical attacks coincided with the Iranian Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati's speech at the Geneva disarmament conference, Thursday, in which he con-

vincingly spelled out the dangers of this form of warfare. Iraqi warplanes had also chemically bombed residential areas of the southern Iranian port city of Khorramshahr twice Friday morning in gross violation of all international norms. However, due to the vigilence of the IRGC anti-chemical units the effects of the Iraqi chemical bombing was neutralised.

Meanwhile, artillery fire of the Muslim forces on Iraqi positions and strongholds destroyed two vehicles, five group bunkers, two gun emplacements and an anti-aircraft gun of the enemy troops, killing a number of them.

Scores of Iraqi soldiers were also killed in more fighting in Bakhtaran border fronts Friday and Saturday. Exchange of heavy artillery fire raged more heavily in Qasr-e Shirin region where Iranian combatants destroyed several Iraqi heavy guns and set ablaze three munitions dumps.

Iraqi Chemical Attack Foiled

LD110732 Tehran IRNA in English 0727 GMT 11 Apr 87

[Text] Tehran, April 11, IRNA — A patrol unit of Muslim combatants in a blitz attack crushed an enemy military convoy intending to carry out chemical attacks against Muslim combatants west of the Jasim River in Karbala'-8 operational region Thursday. The personnel of the enemy convoy were killed or wounded and its chemical cargo was destroyed. Iran's Muslim combatants all returned to bases safely.

The destruction of the chemical cargo contaminated Iraqi troop concentration areas and a large group of their forces were believed to have suffered chemical wounds.

Air Force Bombs 'Karbala'-8' Area

LD111128 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1030 GMT 11 Apr 87

[Text] According to the report from Khatem ol-Anbiya', center for the joint operations of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps and the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the fast-flying pilots of the Air Force of the Islamic Republic of Iran, with the objective of backing and supporting the combatants of Islam, in the "Karbala'-8" operational sector, flying dozens of their fighter-bombers, in separate operations at 0628, 0722, 0746, 0813, 0835, 0958, and 1107, bombed the positions and fortifications of the Ba'thist-Zionist enemy.

After inflicting heavy losses and casualties on them, all returned safely to base.

Also at 0951 a Sukhoi-22-type aircraft of the Ba'thist enemy became a target of the alert antiaircraft unit of the Air Force of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the "Karbala'-8" operational sector. The aircraft was brought down.

With the downing of this aircraft, the number of aircraft downed since the start of the "Karbala'-8" operations until now has reached eight.

IRGC Repulses Counterattack

LD111131 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1030 GMT 11 Apr 87

[Text] The second heavy counterattack to be launched by the Iraqi Ba'thist Army, led by Lieutenant General 'Adnan Kahyrallah, the regime's minister of defense, was repulsed this morning thanks to the unequalled courage of the Islamic forces, and two brigades of the Iraqi special Presidential Guards, responsible for the main axis of the counterattack, were crushed.

A report received from the "Karbala'-8" operational theater reads: The Iraqi ruling regime's army, following its repeated defeats in the "Karbala'-8" operational theater, today regrouped the remnants of its smashed brigades and dispatched the 2d and 5th Iraqi Presidential Guards Armored Brigades and staged a strong counterattack. Islam's forces succeeded in killing or wounding more than 3,000 attacking troops of the Zionist enemy, and of taking many others as prisoners.

According to the same report, in the course of today's abortive counterattack by the forces of the Iraqi regime, led by Lt Gen 'Adnan Khayrallah, Iraq's defense minister, in addition to the destruction of the 2d and 5th Iraqi Special Presidential Guards, the 68th Special Forces, 6th Armored, 14th Mechanized, the remnants of the 421st Brigade, and 1 tank battalion of the 26th Iraqi Armored Brigade were also destroyed. Seventy tanks and more than 100 APC's and vehicles were destroyed by the anti-armor units of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps [IRGC].

According to the same report, Lt Gen 'Adnan Kharallah, the Iraqi regime's defense minister — who arrived in the operational sector 2 days ago by the direct order of Saddam to supervise the Iraqi Army units because of disobedience by many Iraqi soldiers and the inability of various units to carry out the counterattack — was forced today to bring into action units of the Iraqi Presidential Guards. By noon today, three brigades of the Iraqi special Presidential Guards Division were destroyed.

The fighting combatants of the IRGC, today fully repulsed a major counterattack by the Zionist enemy, and forced the Iraqi regime forces to retreat after suffering heavy casualties.

Communique No 2,803

LD111740 Tehran IRNA in English 1724 GMT 11 Apr 87

[Text] Tehran, April 11, IRNA — Eleven foreign cargo ships and tankers were searched by Iranian Navy in the Hormuz Strait Friday, but no suspicious cargo was discovered, according to the 2803rd joint staff communique released here Saturday.

An Iraqi infantry company attempted to infiltrate Iranian defence lines in a Western front early Saturday, but was forced to flee when it came under artillery fire of the Muslim forces who also inflicted some casualties on enemy troops.

A tank, a motor pool and parts of the enemy defence and artillery positions were set afire by artillery fire of the Iranian combatants in a western front.

In a southern front, an Iraqi patrol unit clashed with Iranian patrols Friday morning but was forced to flee leaving behind some military equipment.

In another action in the southern fronts, especially in Chazabeh, Faqqeh, Talaiyeh and Kushk, Iranian forces responded to enemy's tank and artillery fire Friday and Saturday.

Reconnaissance flights of Iraqi helicopters were also checked in Pich-e Angizeh and Sharhani.

Iranian gendarmerie forces totally destroyed an Iraqi 106 mm gun, a command jeep and parts of the enemy heavy gun emplacements in the areas of their mission.

According to the communique five Iraqi soldiers and civilians sought asylum in the Islamic Republic Thursday.

Spokesman Denies Planes Downed

LD120852 Tehran IRNA in English 0755 GMT 12 Apr 87

[Text] Tehran, April 12, IRNA — Iran categorically denied Saturday claims of the Iraqi regime's military communique No. 2638, of having downed three Iranian fighter planes.

A spokesman for the War Information Headquarters (WIH) said Sunday that all Iranian fighter planes after bravely accomplishing their saturday missions, returned safely to their bases. "Iraqi allegations are mere lies," he added.

Meanwhile, the spokesman strongly refuted Iraqi claims alleging Iran of having shelled residential areas in Al-Shu'aybah and Zubayr, Iraq.

The allegations appeared in a note written by the Iraqi U.N. representative to the organization's secretary general, Saturday.

The WIH spokesman said that the objective of the Baghdad regime in raising these claims was to pave the way for its new acts of mischief. But, the spokesman stressed, Muslim forces of Iran were prepared to strongly confront any mischievous act of the enemy.

Iraqi Positions Near Basra Bombed

LD121652 Tehran IRNA in English 1649 GMT 12 Apr 87

[Text] Tehran, April 12, IRNA — Iranian jet fighters bombed Iraqi positions in the Karbala'-8 operational theater, east of Basra six times Sunday, setting ablaze parts of enemy fortifications and equipment, reported Khatem ol-Anbiya' Headquarters today. The report said that the fighters returned safely to bases after the bombing missions which took place at 10:57, 10:59, 11:20, 11:27, 11:55 and 12:43 GMT.

Communique No 2,804

LD121657 Tehran IRNA in English 1654 GMT 12 Apr 87

[Text] Tehran, April 12, IRNA — Muslim combatants of Iran continued fighting Iraqi troops throughout the fronts of the Iraqi-imposed war Saturday, inflicting substantial casualties and losses on enemy troops, said a military communique here Sunday.

The 2804th joint staff communique said that a number of Iraqi soldiers were killed or wounded and one enemy tank, one munitions dump and several bunkers destroyed in a western front Saturday when they were hit by Iranian artillery fire.

Iranian gendarmerie forces responded to Iraqi artillery fire in parts of the southern and western fronts yesterday, killing several enemy soldiers and destroying six enemy gun emplacements and one vehicle.

Iraqi forces suffered heavy losses in men and equipment in the northwestern fronts Saturday in exchange of artillery and mortar fire with Iranian Muslim combatants. Movement of an enemy vehicle column was also checked.

Reconnaissance flights of Iraqi helicopters were checked by Iranian anti-aircraft fire in Sardasht, northwestern fronts, and in Zobeydah, Chilat, Bajaliyeh and Faqqeh, southern fronts Saturday.

Iran's Navy gunboats intercepted and inspected an oil tanker and a warship in the Strait of Hormuz Saturday but allowed them to continue voyage after finding no suspicious cargo on board, the communique concluded.